



Durham Appearance Commission

MEMO

Date: **June 2, 2014**

To: **Members of the Durham City Council**

From: **Howard R. Holcomb, Chair, Durham City-County Appearance Commission**

Subject: **2013 Durham City-County Appearance Commission Annual Report**

Introduction. The Durham City-County Appearance Commission is an advisory board whose mission is to improve the aesthetic character of the City and County of Durham. The Commission members are appointed by both the City Council and Board of County Commissioners. Commission members have a variety of backgrounds including architecture, landscape architecture, interior design, development, and real estate, as well as citizens interested in design and appearance issues. The Commission meets the third Wednesday of every month at 5:30 p.m. in Conference Room GA on the ground floor of City Hall. This report provides a summary of the Commission's work in 2013.

General Commission Accomplishments for 2013. The commission has dedicated time to several projects this year including the Golden Leaf Awards and Gateways. However, the commission had its most success this year when it worked with Durham County to move forward an idea on providing additional historic context to the statues that sit outside the county buildings at 200 E. Main Street in Downtown Durham. The idea was to point out the positive changes that have been taking place in the the community of Durham. After many discussions of the subject including some with the County Managers office, the county has now stated that it will take up the mantle of this project when the changes and renovations on that site begin in earnest in the near future. The commission is looking forward to seeing those changes take form.

Golden Leaf Awards. The Golden Leaf Awards Program recognizes contributions to the community in the field of design. The focus of the awards can be any form of building design including residential, commercial, industrial or community buildings. It can also apply to parks, open spaces, and the people who contribute to improving our community appearance and making our community a more pleasant place to live.

Although the commission did not hold an awards ceremony in 2013, it has spent a great deal of time in discussion with Keep Durham Beautiful (KDB), Durham Convention and Visitors Bureau (DCVB), Durham Appearance Advocacy Group (DAAG) and others in an effort to not only keep the awards alive but to update them as well. The commission would like to build a user friendly website that could help to streamline everything involving future awards from the donations standpoint to the applications and voting. They are also looking at changes to the physical awards and to the presentation of them. The commission is excited to hopefully make a change that they believe will help the program thrive.

Overall Commission Goals for 2014. The Commission plans to continue to provide input on the Central Durham Gateway Plan. We seek to advocate good design, in both the private and public sectors, and encourage all projects to consider innovative design and high standards to be an important element in the success of any project.

One of the challenges facing the Commission had been to maintain the membership and to fill all the seats. However, the commission as well as both the city and county clerks office as well as planning staff have actively been seeking new members and as a result, the commission, as of this report, is currently seating 13 of 15 positions.

In 2014, the Commission intends to:

- Continue to provide input and provide any help possible to the Durham Gateway Plan;
- Pursue achievable goals such as the statue project in 2013 in a continuing effort to improve community appearance;
- Continue presenting the commissions Road Show program, including it's powerpoint presentation, to various local groups and business leaders in an effort to spread the word of the commission's goals
- Update and improve the Golden Leaf Awards program in collaboration with KDB, DCVB, DAAG as well as other groups

The Appearance Commission looks forward to another year helping to make Durham a better and more beautiful place to live and work.

2013 Durham City County Appearance Commission Members. Wayne Allsbrook, Jane Brasier, David Davis, Doug Dorney (Secretary), Howard Holcomb (Chair), Natasha Harris Smith, Fredrick Jernigan, Chris Kimaru, Teddy Maynor, Faye Paige, Jonathan Dupree, Pamela Porter, and Ellen Weinstein

Recommendation. To receive the Annual Report.